

Municipality of North Cowichan

Regular Council

AGENDA

Wednesday, September 2, 2020, 1:30 p.m.
Electronically

Pages

1. CALL TO ORDER

This meeting, though electronic, is open to the public and all representations to Council form part of the public record. At this time, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, public access to Council Chambers is not permitted, however, this meeting may be viewed on the District's lived stream webcast at www.northcowichan.ca/agendas.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Recommendation:

That Council adopt the agenda, as circulated [or as amended].

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Regular Council meeting held August 19, 2020 for adoption

4 - 8

Recommendation:

That Council adopt the minutes of the Regular Council meeting held August 19, 2020.

3.2 Special Council meeting held August 26, 2020 for adoption

9 - 9

Recommendation:

That Council adopt the minutes of the Special Council meeting held August 26, 2020.

4. MAYOR'S REPORT

5. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

5.1 Cowichan Housing Society

10 - 19

Purpose: To hear from John Horn, Executive Director of the Cowichan Housing Society regarding how the Society can assist Council in achieving their social housing objectives within the Strategic Plan.

6. PUBLIC INPUT

The Mayor to acknowledge receipt of submissions circulated to Council prior to the meeting to Agenda@northcowichan.ca and state the agenda item the public input is in relation to on this agenda.

7. **BYLAWS**

8. **REPORTS**

8.1 **2021 Budget Public Engagement**

20 - 24

Purpose: To provide a recommendation to Council for public engagement on the 2021 budget.

Recommendation:

That Council direct staff to:

1. Undertake an online communications campaign to inform the public about the 2021 budget and upcoming budget Committee of the Whole meetings.
2. Refer the issue of in-person, face-to-face, general community meetings to the Public Engagement and Communications Committee for consideration as part of the development of the Public Engagement Framework and Policy.

8.2 **Safer Community Update**

25 - 65

Purpose: Staff to update Council on the progress of the Safer Working Group.

Recommendation:

That Council direct staff to collect better data to quantify the Corridor Safety Office and conduct a survey of businesses and residents in the patrol area to learn of the impacts from their perspective.

8.3 **Leadership Development Opportunities**

66 - 68

Purpose: To identify opportunities to strengthen the functionality of the Council decision-making process.

9. **NOTICES OF MOTIONS**

9.1 **Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Manhas regarding existing illegal secondary suites**

Purpose: To introduce Councillor Manhas' motion "*That Council direct staff to prepare a report identifying potential safety issues, and financial and liability impacts and/or risks to the municipality in relation to existing illegal secondary suites in North Cowichan*" which he intends to move so that it may be debated and considered by Council at the September 16, 2020 regular meeting.

10. **UNFINISHED AND POSTPONED BUSINESS**

11. **NEW BUSINESS**

12. **QUESTION PERIOD**

A 10-minute recess to be provided to give the public an opportunity to submit their questions by email to QP@northcowichan.ca regarding the business discussed at this meeting. Questions will be read out in the order they are received.

13. CLOSED SESSION

Recommendation:

That Council close the September 2, 2020 Regular Council meeting at ____ p.m. to the public on the basis of the following sections of the *Community Charter*:

- 90(1)(c) labour relations or other employee relations;
- 90(1)(e) the acquisition, disposition or expropriation of land or improvements, which the council considers that disclosure could reasonably be expected to harm the interests of the municipality; and
- 90(1)(m) which is a matter that, under another enactment, that being section 16(1)(a)(iii) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* regarding related to intergovernmental relations or negotiations with an aboriginal government
- 90(2)(b) the consideration of information received and held in confidence relating to negotiations between the municipality and a provincial government or the federal government or both, or between a provincial government or the federal government or both and a third party.

13.1 Minutes from the August 19, 2020 Council closed meeting and the August 26, 2020 Special Council closed meeting for adoption

13.2 Closed under section 90(1)(c) labour relations

13.3 Closed under section 90(1)(e) land matter

13.4 Closed under section (90)(1)(m) FOIPPA section 16 and 90(2)(b) Negotiations

13.5 Closed under sections 90(1)(e) land matter and (m) Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act Section 16

14. RISE AND REPORT

15. ADJOURNMENT

Municipality of North Cowichan

Regular Council

MINUTES

August 19, 2020, 1:30 p.m.
Electronically

Members Present Mayor Al Siebring
 Councillor Rob Douglas
 Councillor Christopher Justice
 Councillor Tek Manhas
 Councillor Rosalie Sawrie
 Councillor Debra Toporowski

Members Absent Councillor Kate Marsh

Staff Present Sarah Nixon, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (D/CAO)
 Mark Frame, General Manager, Financial and Protective Services
 David Conway, Director of Engineering
 Rob Conway, Director of Planning and Building
 Jason Birch, Chief Information Officer
 Megan Jordan, Manager, Communications and Public Engagement
 Michelle Martineau, Corporate Officer
 Chris Hutton, Community Planning Coordinator

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, Mayor Siebring called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Item 8.5 [Permissive Tax Exemption] was removed from the agenda.

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That Council approve the agenda as amended.

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

An error was noted in the July 15, 2020 Regular Council and Public Hearing minutes and item 8.4 were corrected to reflect that Councillor Toporowski had been opposed.

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That Council adopt the following minutes:

1. Special Council meeting held July 15, 2020;
2. Regular Council and Public Hearing meeting held July 15, 2020 as amended; and,
3. Special Council meeting held July 29, 2020.

CARRIED

4. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Siebring provided a verbal update on meetings and activities he recently attended.

5. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

None.

6. PUBLIC INPUT

Council received 4 submissions via email prior to the meeting regarding agenda items 8.3, 8.5, 8.6 and 11.2. A summary of those submissions was read out in the meeting.

7. BYLAWS

7.1 Building Amendment (BC Energy Step Code) Bylaw No. 3795, 2020

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That Council adopt Building Amendment (BC Energy Step Code) Bylaw No. 3795, 2020.

CARRIED

7.2 Zoning Regulation of Cannabis Production Facilities in the Agricultural Land Reserve

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

1. That Council give first and second readings to Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Cannabis Production in the Agricultural Land Reserve) No. 3797, 2020;
2. That a public hearing be scheduled for Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Cannabis Production in the Agricultural Land Reserve) No. 3797, 2020 in accordance with the *Local Government Act*; and,
3. That Council adopt the ALR Non-Soil Based Cannabis Production Facility Policy.

CARRIED

8. REPORTS

8.1 RCMP Detachment Net-Zero Feasibility Study and Federation of Canadian Municipalities Capital Grant

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That Council receive the ReNu Engineering July 8, 2020, Net Zero Energy Analysis – Feasibility Study;

And that Council authorize staff to apply for a Federation of Canadian Municipalities Capital Grant - New Construction Energy-Efficient Municipal Facilities.

CARRIED

8.2 RCMP Service Review Scope

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

1. That Council authorize staff to engage in an RCMP financial service review focusing on value for money.
2. That Council authorize staff to hire a consultant to conduct a Gap Analysis study of Protective and Community Services to determine, by January 31, 2021:

- a. what changes in methods of delivery of those services might be advisable and statutorily achievable in the short term; and,
- b. that any recommended changes in the methods of delivery of those services which are not statutorily achievable be presented for consideration to the BC Legislature's All Party Committee that is currently reviewing the Police Act.

(Opposed: Manhas)

CARRIED

8.3 Henry Road Solar Signalized Pedestrian Crossing

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That Council approve the installation of a signalized pedestrian crossing on Henry Road, adjacent to the Mt. Brenton Golf Course, at an estimated budget of \$60,000.

CARRIED

8.4 COVID-19 Reopening Plan for Fuller Lake Arena Recommendation from the August 11, 2020 Committee of the Whole Meeting

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That Council direct staff to proceed with the re-opening of the Fuller Lake Arena under its COVID-19 Restoration of Programs & Services Plan, specifically;

- To allow for a phased-in resumption of services effective September 8, 2020; and,
- To support the COVID-19 restrictions outlined for facility usage.

CARRIED

8.5 Permissive Tax Exemption

Item was removed.

8.6 2nd Quarter Financial Report

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That Council accept the August 19, 2020 2nd Quarter Financial Report by the Manager, Budgets and Infrastructure for information.

CARRIED

8.7 Municipal Auditors Appointment 2020-2024

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That Council appoint KPMG LLP as the Municipal Auditors for the District of North Cowichan for the 2020-2024 audit period at a cost of \$214,500 for the five years.

CARRIED

8.8 Moratorium on Delegations

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That Council lift the moratorium on delegations to allow them to address Council through electronic means;

And that a limit of up to three delegations or presentations at the same meeting be established for electronic meetings.

CARRIED

8.9 Notice of Motion Policy

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That Council adopt the Notice of Motion Policy as presented and attached to the Manager of Legislative Services August 19, 2020 report.

CARRIED

9. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

None.

10. UNFINISHED AND POSTPONED BUSINESS

None.

11. NEW BUSINESS

11.1 Inclusivity Planning

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That Council resolves:

1. As part of 2021 business planning, staff consider what may be further required to achieve Council's vision for an inclusive community and,
2. Toward that end, that a Committee of the Whole be scheduled for the fall of 2020 to clarify Council's vision for an inclusive community and,
3. That Staff report back to Council with a proposal in early 2021.

CARRIED

11.2 Cowichan Valley Proposed Overdose Prevention Site

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That Council authorize the Mayor to write a letter to Island Health, supporting the enhanced services envisioned for the new Wellness and Recovery Centre at 5878 York Road, but objecting to the lack of community consultation with respect to the siting of the facility.

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That the motion "That Council authorize the Mayor to write a letter to Island Health, supporting the enhanced services envisioned for the new Wellness and Recovery Centre at 5878 York Road, but objecting to the lack of community consultation with respect to the siting of the facility" be amended to insert "and asking Island Health to pause the planning on the facility until community consultation takes place" after facility.

(Opposed: Sawrie, Toporowski)

CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That Council authorize the Mayor to write a letter to Island Health, supporting the enhanced services envisioned for the new Wellness and Recovery Centre at 5878 York Road, but objecting to the lack of community consultation with respect to the siting of the facility and asking Island Health to pause the planning on the facility until community consultation takes place.

CARRIED

12. QUESTION PERIOD

Mayor Siebring called for a recess at 3:13 p.m. to allow viewers to submit questions via email on the matters discussed during the meeting. Two questions had been submitted regarding item 8.6 when the meeting reconvened at 3:24 p.m.

13. CLOSED SESSION

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That Council close the August 19, 2020 Regular Council meeting at 3:26 p.m. to the public on the basis of the following sections of the *Community Charter*:

- 90(1)(a) - personal information about an identifiable individual who holds or is being considered for a position as an officer, employee or agent of the municipality or another position appointed by the municipality;
- 90(1)(f) - law enforcement, which the council considers that disclosure could reasonably be expected to harm the conduct of an investigation under or enforcement of an enactment; and
- 90(1)(j) - information that is prohibited, or information that if it were presented in a document would be prohibited, from disclosure under section 21 of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*;

CARRIED

14. RISE AND REPORT

Council rose and reported on the selection of the following members for OCP Advisory Committee and Community Ambassador Teams:

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That Council appoint Ender McDuff and Brielle Varasteh to the OCP Advisory Committee.

CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That Council amend the terms of reference for the OCP Advisory Committee to increase the maximum number of volunteers to 14.

CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That Council appoint

- Lisa Hudson to the Berkey's Corner Community Ambassador Team
- Craig Meredith and Rhiannon Snaith to the South End Centre Community Ambassador Team
- Gregg Perry, Margo Young and Sheryl Sametz to the Quamichan Community Ambassador Team

CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That any further vacancies in the OCP Advisory Committee or Ambassador Teams not be filled.

CARRIED

15. ADJOURNMENT

Council adjourned the meeting at 4:12 p.m.

Certified by Corporate Officer

Signed by Mayor

Municipality of North Cowichan Regular Council MINUTES

**August 26, 2020, 9:00 a.m.
Electronically**

Members Present Mayor Al Siebring
 Councillor Rob Douglas
 Councillor Christopher Justice
 Councillor Tek Manhas
 Councillor Rosalie Sawrie
 Councillor Debra Toporowski

Members Absent Councillor Kate Marsh

Staff Present Ted Swabey, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
 Michelle Martineau, Corporate Officer

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, Mayor Siebring called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

MOVED AND SECONDED

That this meeting be closed to the public at 9:11 a.m. on the basis of section 90(2)(d) which is a matter that, under another enactment, that being section 16(1)(a)(iii) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* regarding related to intergovernmental relations or negotiations with an aboriginal government, is such that the public must be excluded from the meeting. CARRIED

2. ADJOURNMENT

Council adjourned the meeting at 10:41 a.m.

Certified by Corporate Officer

Signed by Mayor



Cowichan Housing Association

CVRD
REGIONAL HOUSING SERVICE
WORKPLAN 2020

Housing Trust Fund



Governance Structures

- Community Advisory Committee
- Housing Trust Fund Allocations Committee

Rental Housing Capital Contribution Fund

- Application process
- Review and recommend to CVRD
- Rolling application

Project Development Assistance

- Application process
- Review and recommend to CHA Board
- Rolling application

Housing Trust Fund



Emergency Contingency Fund (ECF)

- Community Advisory Committee to provide input.
- Consult with first responders and Emergency Services.
- Develop a clear direction for the use of this component of the RHS.
- Develop policies, practices, procedures for administration of ECF.
- Implement and communicate to stakeholders.

Housing Research and Information Hub



- Database and GIS mapping of relevant demographic and development data for use by applicants, residents, developers etc. Participation in Community Data program to obtain granular information at neighbourhood level.
- Best practices – policy, practice, building design, programs for residents, CPTED etc.
- Professionals list – Architects, Engineers, Environmental consultants etc.
- Rental Housing / subsidised housing – list of contacts for rental buildings, affordable housing projects for those seeking housing.

Housing Research and Information Hub



- Examples of affordable housing projects – local and not so local examples to inspire potential affordable housing developers.
- Funders – links to funders like BC Housing, CMHC, Van City etc. Brief synopsis to accompany each link.
- Community specific research in smaller jurisdictions.

Strategic Planning, Capacity Building, Outreach



- Work with service providers and others in the region to develop affordable housing projects from project conception to operational phase.
- Enhance collaboration and coordination within the region.
- Provide effective project specific advocacy to funders.
- Review and update the Cowichan Attainable Housing Strategy.
- Develop CHA to have the maximum impact in terms of increasing the number of affordable and attainable units in the region.
- Partner with other funders (CMHC, Van City) to maximize investment in the Cowichan Region.

CHA Management and Administration



- Ensure integrity of policies, processes and accountability mechanisms for allocation of CVRD HTF funds to Affordable Housing developments.
- Project monitoring and performance analysis.
- Committee support (CAC and HTFAC).
- Community Development – contribute to addressing homelessness, work with developers to identify partnership opportunities, volunteer and donor recruitment, input to OCP and area plans.

NC Social Planner/ Affordable housing role

Activities that would complement CHA's work;

Develop and implement municipal policy re Affordable Housing (i.e. DCC Bylaws, Rooming House regulations etc.)

Write and manage Housing Agreements, negotiate amenity contributions

Facilitate acquisition and provision of land

Leads municipal response to prominent social issues

Leveraging of senior government funding into local community– Mental health and Substance Use, childcare funding, New Horizons for Seniors program, Provincial and Federal initiatives

CPTED input to built environment

Revitalization of distressed areas

NC Social Planner/ Affordable housing role

Activities that would complement CHA's work;

Safe, inclusive and inspiring neighbourhoods

Attraction and retention of newcomers

Address impacts of income disparity

Supported Housing, public engagement, implementation

Council's Strategic Plan



Cowichan Housing Association
207-225 Canada Avenue
Duncan, BC, V9L 1T6
250-597-1938
admin@cowichanhousing.com
www.cowichanhousing.com

Report

Date September 2, 2020

File:

To Council

From Sarah Nixon, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Endorsed:



Subject 2021 Budget Public Engagement

Purpose

To provide a recommendation to Council for public engagement on the 2021 budget.

Background

Section 166 of the *Community Charter* requires local governments to “undertake a process of public consultation regarding the proposed financial plan before it is adopted.” North Cowichan has historically exceeded this *Community Charter* requirement through broad advertisement of the Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting series. These meetings typically occur in the fourth quarter, where senior staff workshop the Financial Plan with the COW well before it is presented to Council for the first three readings and adoption. They allow for Council to hear from the public through Council correspondence leading up to the COW meetings, and by way of the public input and question period portions of the COW agenda.

However, in the last five years, North Cowichan has complemented the COW meeting series with additional opportunities for public input on the upcoming year’s budget. That additional public input has been gathered by way of in-person “community conversation” meetings, and even more recently, it has been complemented by parallel online public engagements through PlaceSpeak.

Starting in 2015, public input meetings were held in the evenings across North Cowichan, Crofton, Chemainus and South End, respectively. Sessions were focussed on and structured around presenting information about the upcoming year’s budget by way of information display boards, a presentation from senior staff on key projects and/or cost drivers, participant feedback stations, and a question and answer period.

In effect, the “community conversation” meetings served two purposes. Firstly, to engage the public on the budget. Secondly, to engage with the public on what’s topical or of importance to them and not necessarily the budget itself. This is demonstrated by the nature of general questions asked during the open question and answer portion of these meetings.

Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic presents several practical challenges to continuing with the “community conversation” meeting format in 2020. However, it, also offers an opportunity to pause and reflect on how to engage the public on the budget more effectively. Specifically in future years, and to ensure

there is a strategy in place to provide the public and Council with an annual, informal opportunity to engage face to face - which is not necessarily limited to discussion of the budget.

Meeting Format Challenges

Given the state of the pandemic at the time this report was written, it is unlikely that in-person meetings will be well attended or advisable. While staff do not have specific data to verify, it is staffs' observation that these annual budget meetings are generally well attended by our senior residents whom we know are most at risk during COVID-19. There is also information to support a conclusion that the annual budget "community conversations" are declining in their impact and effectiveness. Attendance at the budget open houses has steadily fallen, from 2015, while online engagement participation has risen since its implementation in 2017, as illustrated in the table below.

Year	In-Person Attendance	Online
2015	170	
2017	95	72
2018	95	118
2019	19	97

Budget Public Engagement Challenges and Opportunities

Low Public Response Rates

The last several years of public input exercises on the budget have not provided Council with reliable public engagement data on which to base Council's decision-making (primarily due to low response rates). For example, targeted engagement about financing Council's Strategic Plan priority projects was undertaken in 2019. Unfortunately, only 19 surveys were completed at the Community Budget Meetings, and Council itself noted the challenge in relying on this engagement data for decision-making.

Budget Cycle Timing and Level of Public Input

Asking the public for input on the budget once it is already drafted based on preliminary direction from Council inherently limits what level of public input on the Internal Association for Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum can be meaningfully achieved, as does asking for public input toward the end of the fiscal year where staff are asking Council to approve the Financial Plan shortly so they can begin new work as soon as possible in the new year.

Staff have spent much of the third quarter of 2020, preparing 2021 business plans, supported by 2021 operating and capital budgets, that continue to follow through on previously planned and budgeted multi-year projects identified in Council's Strategic Plan (i.e. the Official Community Plan update, relocating Rowing Canada, etc.), and the specific preliminary 2021 budget direction, to support the organization and community's recovery from COVID-19, provided by Council on June 9, 2020:

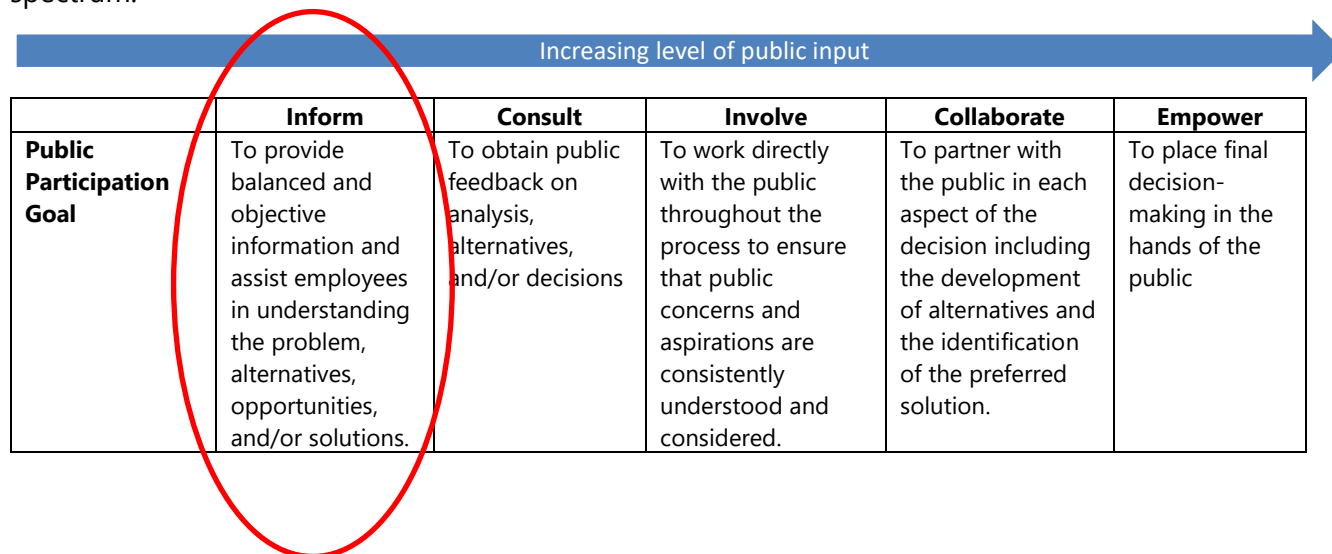
1. *Developing projects, and finding resources to work on, improving our natural assets and green infrastructure and achieving our climate related mitigation, adaptation resiliency goals; and which,*
2. *Provide both short and longer term employment opportunities for those sectors of society that have been particularly impacted by the pandemic shut down to support the local Cowichan economy; and,*
3. *That is "agile" in the sense of anticipating possible second waves of infection and economic shutdown, and which recognizes the uncertainty of the immediate future.*

2021 Budget Engagement

Given all of the above-noted meeting format and public engagement challenges, as described from past practice, as well as COVID-19, staff believe that 2020 presents a good opportunity to reconsider the "community conversation" budget engagement meeting format and plan for a new, more robust budget public engagement process beginning in 2021.

Staff are recommending that Council proceed with aggressively promoting the planned fourth quarter COW meetings via a (primarily) online communications campaign to share more detailed budget information and to encourage the public input opportunity presented by the upcoming 2021 budget COW meetings. This campaign would include advertising on social media and electronic newsletters to individuals who have requested to receive information from the Municipality by email, along with some newsprint media advertising to mirror the social media campaign, and the development of some 2021 budget specific web pages to which the public would be directed. More emphasis on digital and print advertising should reach a larger segment of the community and ultimately encourage more participation at the Budget COW Meetings.

Staff are recommending that this year's public engagement fall on the "inform" side of the IAP2 spectrum.



Promise to the public	We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible	We will implement what you decide
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Budget Engagement for 2022 and Beyond

While this approach does not immediately address what staff believe is many residents' and Council's on-going desire to engage face-to-face in an informal format to discuss what is important to them (not necessarily the budget), the on-going work by the Public Engagement Committee to develop and deliver a Council Public Engagement Framework and Policy will provide staff with clarity on resident and Council expectations for informal and face to face public engagement in future years.

In early 2021, staff intend to bring forward a report to Council recommending that the 2022 budget public consultation process begin earlier in 2021 and before asking Council for preliminary direction on the 2022 budget and subsequent development of the draft budget. Should Council endorse this approach, it would more easily allow for an increased level of public input along the IAP2 spectrum, for example "consult" or "involve," and the format of the engagement (i.e. face-to-face, online, etc.) may be informed by the Council Public Engagement Framework and Policy currently under development.

Option 1 (Recommended)

That Council direct staff to:

1. Undertake an online communications campaign to inform the public about the 2021 budget and upcoming budget Committee of the Whole meetings.
2. Refer the issue of in-person, face-to-face, general community meetings to the Public Engagement Committee for consideration as part of the development of the Public Engagement Framework and Policy.

Option 2

That Council direct staff to proceed with public input on the 2021 budget consistent with previous years, including online and in-person meetings which comply with COVID-19 safety measures.

Implications

Using an online communications campaign, supplemented by some newspaper ads, to inform the public regarding the 2021 budget and promote the upcoming COW meetings will require Financial Services and Communications staff time to create the campaign materials. The cost of an online campaign is minimal and likely limited to graphic design to brand the 2021 budget and to purchase social and newsprint media ads. Staff estimate the total cost at around \$2,000 for design and advertising, which can be covered by the existing budget, especially given that there is no requirement to cover room rentals and food and beverage charges for in-person meetings.

Foregoing in-person meetings also ensures that Council, senior staff, and the public remain safe from the health and safety threat of COVID-19, and that North Cowichan continues to demonstrate community leadership in finding creative ways to conduct business during the pandemic that are consistent with the guidance of the Provincial Health Officer.

This staff recommendation is consistent with Council's Strategic Plan priority of engagement: "through...engaging the community at large, we achieve the optimum outcomes for all."

Recommendation

That Council direct staff to:

1. Undertake an online communications campaign to inform the public about the 2021 budget and upcoming budget Committee of the Whole meetings.
2. Refer the issue of in-person, face-to-face, general community meetings to the Public Engagement and Communications Committee for consideration as part of the development of the Public Engagement Framework and Policy.

Safer Community Plan Update

Regular Council Meeting
September 2, 2020

Safer Community Plan (SCP)

Adopted by Council July 17, 2019

Key Recommended Actions:

1. Joint Local Government (LG) Safer Working Group
2. Corridor Safety Office
3. Impact on Business and the Highway Corridor
4. Health and Social Services Roles
5. RCMP Crime Reduction – Crime Analyst
6. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
7. Dealing with Problem Properties

Joint LG Safer Working Group

- Working Group meets on a monthly basis
 - *Subject matter experts (e.g. mental health, addiction services, BC Housing, etc.) are invited to provide advice at meetings*
- Actions prior to COVID-19 included:
 - *Erected panhandling signage*
 - *Adjusted operation patrols to include nightshifts*

Corridor Safety Office (CSO) – Facility

- Rented the old Duncan music store at 490 Trans-Canada Hwy on September 1, 2019
 - *2 year shared lease, \$2,125 monthly*
 - *Facility opened in December 2019*
- Renovations completed in December 2019
 - *Drywall, painting, new flooring*
 - *Furnishings and equipment*



CSO - Operations

- Initial intent was for facility to operate similar to the one in Campbell River
- Currently only North Cowichan Bylaw Compliance Officers and Security Ambassadors are operating from this location
- Joint North Cowichan/Duncan daily bicycle patrols

Impact on Businesses and Highway Corridor

- Businesses provided with “Who to Call” pamphlet
- Businesses contact Security Ambassadors to inform on public safety and disorder issues
- Daily patrols initially provided businesses with a (visual) sense of security
 - *Security Ambassadors corridor patrol between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m.*
 - *Extra bylaw compliance officer patrols of municipal facilities at the onset of COVID-19*

Impact on Businesses and Highway Corridor

- Increased needle pick up as a result of the quantities provided by Overdose Prevention Site
- Garbage/camp clean up is a challenge
- Land Trust using contractors for cleaning up marshlands



Impact on Businesses and Highway Corridor

- Initial effectiveness of disbursing individuals and preventing them from negatively impacting businesses and the community worked well
 - *After 10 months the effectiveness has decreased*
 - *Highway Use Bylaw authorizes compliance officers to move tents/structures that are in front of businesses when they are blocking the sidewalk*
 - *Harm reduction material still very prevalent on the streets; lobbying needs to be continued at provincial level*



COVID Provincial Enforcement

- Bylaw Compliance Officers responded to:
 - *3 calls for service for non-compliance for not self quarantining (14 days)*
 - *12 compliance checks for businesses, ordered by the Province, to shut down or have safety plans in place for distancing and occupant loads*
- Provide guidance to business owners in relation to BC's Restart Plan

RCMP Crime Reduction

Crime Analyst

- Crime Analyst hired May 2020
- Crime Analyst will support crime reduction for the whole Municipality, as well as the Highway Corridor
 - *Researches, collates, evaluates and analyzes information to develop intelligence and assistance*
 - *Very effective tool in crime reduction*

Crime Reduction

Compliance Officers / Working Group

- Existing bylaws only enable Compliance Officers to ticket the property or business owner for failure to clear debris on adjacent sidewalks
- Proposed “Public Nuisance Bylaw” to address the individual as well as the property owner (as under existing bylaws) for non-compliance to be brought forward in Q3 or Q4 of 2020

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

- Use of fencing to discourage criminal activities
 - *Fencing was placed on Lewis Street to prevent tents from blocking the sidewalk and roadway*
 - *Permanent fencing is proposed for Whistler Street to help reduce criminal activity*
- Establish a "Graffiti Removal" program to eliminate "street ownership" and visible signs of crime



Dealing With Problem Properties

- Continue to work with Warmland
 - *Many of the regular/local displaced residents have moved to the tent sites provided by Island Health*
 - *Those that remain, are either new arrivals or cannot be assisted due to violent behaviour or mental health and addiction issues, continue to camp on sidewalk*
 - *New management of facility*
- Proposed “Nuisance Abatement and Cost Recovery Bylaw” to be brought forward in Q4 of 2020

Dealing With Problem Properties

- Assisted RCMP with marsh evictions
- Daily sidewalk evictions from Lewis and York streets
- Assisted with sidewalk evictions from library property



Next Steps

- Collect better data to quantify CSO Office
 - *Blackbird and Bylaw will move to tracking using Excel*
 - *Data will be available to the Crime Analyst in addition to RCMP Calls for Service*
- Conduct a survey of businesses and residents in the patrol area to learn of the impacts from their perspective.

Any questions?

June 13th., 2019

Ted Swabey
Chief Administrative Officer
Municipality of North Cowichan

Peter De Verteuil
Chief Administrative Officer
City of Duncan

Re: Municipality of North Cowichan and City of Duncan – Safer Community Plan – Recommended Actions

Introduction

Thank you for this opportunity to submit the Recommended Actions in this Safer Community Plan (SCP). We have now as of June 6th. completed the Stakeholder Review part of the process. This review was by way of a group meeting with 24 of the original 30 interviewees able to attend and each give their overview comments to the larger group. I thank these Stakeholder attendees for their commitment to this process of moving forward to address the importance of a Safer Community and working together towards that goal.

I'd like to introduce additional comments in the SCP as a result of this Stakeholder input – both are found under Recommended Action #1 Safer Working Group – External Partnerships: 1) Future discussion with Cowichan Tribes as to their sitting on SWG and participating in the work of the Corridor Safety Office (CSO) and 2) Establishing linkage between the SWG and the Cowichan Community Action Team (CAT) which works with matters of substance use, the opioid crisis and issues related to mental health and homelessness. Both of these comments are described under Recommended Action #1 Safer Working Group – External Partners.

The neighbouring municipalities of the Municipality of North Cowichan and the City of Duncan (“the Communities” or the “Local Governments” [LG]), like many other municipalities, are faced with challenges as they deal with crime and public-disorder matters occurring in their respective communities.

To be successful, this SCP needs to include many stakeholders, including mayors and city councils, First Nations, the RCMP, LG departments, provincial ministries, area

businesses, health and social services and local neighbourhoods—all are vital to achieving the common goal of having a safer community.

Your collaborative and respectful relationships with the Cowichan Tribes brings with it a shared concern for the effects crime and public disorder are having on all people—and helps provide a way to move forward together in dealing with the emerging challenges arising from homelessness, poverty, mental health and substance use, crime and public disorder.

While listening to your community speak, I was reminded of the fact that homelessness is not just the result of mental illness and substance use. It is increasing as a result of poverty. This fact is evident in the diversity of the people who are on the street.

Similar to what is occurring in North Cowichan and Duncan, many communities across the province are now sharing their concerns regarding the rising levels of homelessness and public disorder. Many communities report that a rise in homelessness and public disorder began approximately two years ago—a rise that coincides with the opioid crisis and increasing signs of poverty.

Communities will need to face these emerging challenges together given their shared boundaries. Crime and public disorder do not take any notice of which side of the highway they are on or what community they are in.

Although I focus to a large extent on the crime and public-disorder aspects of addressing rising community concern, I want to say clearly that long-term actions to address these concerns will be best achieved through community support for the work being done by the health and social service agencies, and that the future availability of housing is integral to reducing crime and public disorder in all its forms.

Although this report deals specifically with an area known as the Highway Corridor, the specifics of the report and the recommended actions are meant to give the Communities tools they can adapt to address public disorder occurring elsewhere.

The key is to create a new organizational capacity and framework to address community public safety concerns in a variety of circumstances. In the case of the Communities, it starts with the Highway Corridor, but its impact will have further value through building partnerships among local governments, the police, social and health agencies and the business community.

Our ability to respectfully partner with those having differing security and social perspectives is key to successfully developing and implementing an effective SCP. Not only are the police important to lessening crime and disorder, but increased municipal efforts are also required as is the successful delivery of health and social services.

We are in this together for the betterment of all community members. We want to improve the situation for neighbourhoods, social services and businesses as well as for people who are street entrenched, dealing with poverty and dealing with mental illness and substance use.

Reducing crime and public disorder is a community problem and requires a community solution.

The writer interviewed thirty (30+) people in this process, including elected officials, First Nations staff, LG staff, RCMP, fire department staff, business owners, citizens, school officials, service providers, social services providers and healthcare professionals.

I wish to submit recommendations regarding actions that can be taken to lessen the impact of crime and disorder occurring in the Highway Corridor specifically and in the community generally.

Foreword

It is difficult to make recommendations for all the factors that can influence a rise or fall in crime or public disorder. Therefore, this report should be viewed as a submission that offers recommendations based on experience addressing similar factors that are occurring in the Communities, but not giving a guarantee of outcomes.

The SCP is intended to be action-oriented and to provide specific actions to respond to identified issues. This will be evident in the recommendations.

The Communities will need to weigh the benefits of the proposed SCP options as they consider costs, budgets, goals and future developments.

This report is not intended as any form of legal advice.

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Recommended Action #1: Joint LG – Safer Working Group

That the Communities jointly align LG staff and RCMP resources to create a Safer Working Group in order to coordinate actions to address crime and disorder occurring in the community.

That the Safer Working Group guides the operations of the Corridor Safety Office highlighted in Recommendation #4.

That the Communities consider harmonizing municipal bylaws that can lessen the impact from crime and public disorder, including those dealing with nuisance properties, overnight camping, drinking in public, littering and nuisance activities.

The SWG will serve as a permanent working and advisory body. It will be responsible for providing advice and/or making recommendations to councils and LG staff on matters related to crime, public disorder and safety within the Communities.

Crime and public disorder are of rising community concern, and the Communities will need to collaborate closely to address these issues. Closer coordination and communication can be achieved through the creation of a single SWG. This group will coordinate actions between internal LG departments and the RCMP, which will allow for their more effective joint engagement on matters regarding crime and disorder.

The SWG will also provide joint mayors and councils, senior LG staff and the RCMP detachment commander with an operational arm they can utilize when crime and disorder matters arise that are a concern within the community.

This includes, but is not limited to, developing operational responses to the following:

- Addressing community-wide and corridor-security issues
- Improving the protection of parks and facilities

- Developing the coordination and community between LG/RCMP enforcement personnel
- Integrating enforcement and health/social service responses on issues of community safety
- Giving operational focus to the goal of reducing crime and public-disorder activities as well as finding effective community-level responses
- Supporting the rollout of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) actions and dealing with problem properties

This recommendation potentially has significant short-, mid- and long-term impacts on the ability of the Communities to address crime and public disorder. This joint LG-led working group aligns LG and RCMP resources to address crime reduction by implementing strategies that are based on problem-solving and by launching a partnership that can focus available resources more effectively.

Safer Working Group (SWG)



The SWG can function in the following ways:

- Reduce conflict, crime and public disorder in our community by developing a collaborative LG-staffed working group

- Take actions that recognize the fact that integrated health, social and enforcement responses succeed if they are collaborative and coordinated
- Oversee the operation of the CSO if approved
- Realize the ability of LG departments and the RCMP to collaboratively impact crime and public disorder occurring in the community,
- Provide a collective LG-led response to matters of security in the community
- Respond operationally to public-safety problems and develop Action Plans aimed at achieving an effective LG/police response to manage public disorder in both an ethical and practical framework
- Reduce criminal and disorderly behaviour on our streets while protecting the interests of the most vulnerable citizens in the Communities

Key Internal LG departments and police involved: RCMP, Fire, Bylaws, Parks, Public Works, Business Licensing and Planning

Key External partners: Cowichan Tribes, Provincial Health Services, Provincial Social Services, Business Community, Health & Social Service Providers

The SWG serves as a joint LG-led working group. The SWG is responsible for maintaining and enhancing a safe and healthy community that promotes and supports quality of life while encouraging resident involvement and input.

The SWG will invite other groups to attend meetings and engage with them as issues arise that would benefit from collaborations with those agencies or organizations to facilitate joint problem-solving. These groups could also help by providing advice with regard to crime and public disorder issues.

Under the category Key External Partners, I'd make two further comments based on Stakeholder input during the review stage.

- 1) That during the Implementation discussions occur with Cowichan Tribes to ascertain their interest to partner in both the SWG and the CSO. CT are integral partners to the LGs and would be a natural fit for both the SWG and CSO as their community deals with similar issues. As this report was proposed to address matters focussed on crime and public disorder occurring in the LGs, it started only considering the 2 LGS current involved in the SCP. Now having met with many stakeholders in the community, I believe inclusion of the CT in this process should be considered. It would definitely increase the effectiveness, collaboration and communication required for a successful outcome of the SCP.

- 2) It is important to recognize the importance of linkage between the SWG and the Cowichan Communities Action Team (CAT). This has been evident through input during the Stakeholder interview process. CAT deals with collaborative efforts in dealing with substance use, the opioid crisis and issues related to mental health and homelessness. CAT will be one of the key External Partnerships that be will promote effective operational actions by SWG. SWG is an operational group comprised of joint LG staff. I suggest during Implementation phase of SCP we have communication to promote collaborative and effective communication.

The purpose of the SWG is to provide mayors and councils with an ability to do the following:

- Align LG and policing resources to more effectively address crime and public-disorder matters
- Develop a proactive and integrated approach to issues of crime prevention, public disorder and safety
- Partner with First Nations, social, health, neighbourhood and business groups to address issues arising from crime or public-disorder matters that require LG involvement
- Provide co-ordinated services to support public safety throughout the Communities
- Reduce the adverse effects arising from public disorder or criminal activities
- Integrate enforcement and LG departmental responses to issues regarding community safety
- Respond to emerging issues related to public safety,
- Access services and joint strategies that lead to the protection of vulnerable persons
- Bring together those LG resources capable of lessening the crime, security and public-disorder impacts in the community

The SWG is a valuable tool that can help address issues concerning crime and disorder occurring in the whole community. In conjunction with LG bylaw enforcement officers, RCMP officers and private security ambassadors, the SWG can bring a joint focus to lessening crime and public disorder in the Highway Corridor.

Another area that requires consideration by the joint Communities is the fact that municipal enforcement bylaws and policies can differ along the Highway Corridor. This can lead to confusion within the public, business and street population. These bylaws and policies need to be harmonized where possible. The Communities could consider harmonizing municipal bylaws that lessen the impacts from crime and public disorder,

including those dealing with nuisance properties, overnight camping, drinking in public, littering, dealing with chattels and nuisance activities.

Recommended Action #2: Corridor Safety Office

That the Communities create a Corridor Safety Office “storefront” to coordinate and address crime and disorder occurring in the Highway Corridor.

That the Communities commit bylaw enforcement officers to being part of a coordinated presence in the Highway Corridor and as part of the increased enforcement presence addressing public disorder and supporting health and social responses.

That the Communities contract a daytime security ambassador to provide “eyes” on the street and a presence in the Highway Corridor to discourage crime and public-disorder activities.

That the RCMP addresses crime reduction in the Highway Corridor area and assigns supportive, investigative and analytical resources, as able, to reduce crime and public-disorder activities occurring in this area.

That the Communities create a separate “Who Do You Call?” information brochure that lets business owners and the general public know how to report suspicious occurrences, illegal activities and LG-maintenance issues to the right service provider.

This recommendation identifies actions that can be taken to assist in reclaiming, maintaining and protecting the future of the Highway Corridor and the general community as a safe place to visit, shop, work and live.

The Highway Corridor area is the first “Welcome” sign for visitors and travellers alike to the Communities. It is the doorway into downtown Duncan. It needs to be supported and public disorder needs to be addressed. The CSO will be a base for LG bylaw enforcement officers, contracted security ambassadors and RCMP investigative officers.

The Communities are changing rapidly, and public expectations for a safe community continue to increase and will continue to do so as the population grows. Provision of a secure Highway Corridor environment where the RCMP, bylaw officers and private security ambassadors have a visible presence will support that goal.

Public disorder will continue to increase if enforcement and security responders are not a more visible presence in the daily life of the Highway Corridor.

Coordination and communication are the key tools to regaining a sense of order in dealing with the stresses that can occur. To achieve that goal necessitates the daily presence of security resources centred in the core area that is under duress.

This will be actioned through the creation of a CSO. The CSO can help deliver daily street-level enforcement of bylaws as well as a police and security response that can help meet the needs of residents, business owners, property owners, social and health service providers and visitors to the community.

Function of Corridor Safety Office

The CSO will be able to provide the following functions:

- Be a central office in the Highway Corridor for communication and coordination of all enforcement and security matters
- Provide a “uniformed” presence in the Highway Corridor by all three enforcement tiers – bylaws enforcement officers, RCMP officers and contracted security ambassadors
- Function as an office for bylaw enforcement officers, RCMP officers and security ambassadors
- Help coordinate and manage the daily activities of contracted security ambassadors
- Allow the RCMP to have a supportive “come and go” presence focussed on crime reduction
- Work closely with Cowichan Tribes enforcement staff
- Allow enforcement personnel to work closely with health and social service providers by referring those in need to these services
- Assist with street-outreach programs that are being run by health and social service providers
- Assist with RMCP crime-reduction efforts
- Allow LG bylaw enforcement officers, RCMP officers and contracted security ambassadors to have a daily presence in the Highway Corridor depending on the most efficient scheduling of those resources,
- Be a point of contact for security problem-solving in the Highway Corridor
- Help promote effective communication within the Highway Corridor area
- Promote research on best practices in public safety and security for the area and for the community

- Help distribute written public safety as well as fire and emergency planning information
- Be a point of contact for merchants, residents and property owners on bylaw enforcement and security-patrol matters,
- Work with the business community and encourage the distribution of security-advisory notifications
- Explore the use of volunteers for communication and on-going educational aspects of service delivery on public-security matters

The CSO office will not be a full-service office. Staff will come and go as required and there will be no clerical support. When no staff are present in the office, the door will be locked.

Any complaints made to the CSO will occur as laid out in the recommended “Who Do You Call?” pamphlet.

Contracting of a Daytime “Security Ambassador” for the Highway Corridor

Business owners and citizens alike can experience crime and public-disorder matters in the Highway Corridor. This has been an on-going concern and a source of frustration in the community. One of the most effective tools to address and counter these concerns is to hire a contracted private security firm to provide “security ambassadors” (SA) to work in the Highway Corridor during key hours. The actual hours can be assigned based on input from the business community and on input from the RCMP regarding reported crime. One of the key times to have a street security presence is in the hour before businesses open so that potential disorder can be addressed in a timely manner.

This security ambassadors will become the constant “eyes” on the street that will enable RCMP and bylaw staff to respond to concerns based on immediate information when incidents are occurring. They can also provide focussed patrols in problematic areas.

The private security contractor who provides these security ambassadors will be required to provide staff who can communicate and engage the street population, work with enforcement personnel, have an understanding of the health and social services resources available, be able to support the work of street-outreach workers, be able to represent the community in an ambassadorial way and, most importantly, be able to work in a respectful way with the street population.

It is important that the same one or two security ambassadors be utilized in order to develop good relationships with all stakeholders—street people, business owners, enforcement personnel, the public, neighbours and visitors alike.

The following is the rationale for hiring a contracted security patroller service:

- Security ambassadors provide enforcement services with “eyes” on the Highway Corridor during key business hours
- Security ambassadors will be part of a coordinated effort by all enforcement services, including bylaw enforcement officers and RCMP officers, to increase their “visible” presence in the Highway Corridor
- Security ambassadors provide a connection to the public in the Highway Corridor
- Security ambassadors are a cost-effective way to address or prevent public-disorder activities—the people in this role will receive a higher wage based on their skill in building effective relationships with the varied clientele they encounter in their duties
- Security ambassadors can commence an early morning patrol before the start of each business day and help resolve any unwanted activity
- Security ambassadors provide the community with a contact person who can assess minor matters before they escalate to a criminal or public-disorder level
- Security ambassadors allow bylaw enforcement officers and RCMP officers to respond effectively to crime as well as bylaw and disorder matters when they are occurring
- Security ambassadors provide appropriate recording and reporting of incidents

Who Do You Call?

This simple recommendation will have a positive impact to help the public and merchants know who to call to report specific situations. The brochure/card will lay out what services are available and how to contact those services. It will be a handy guide to keep available for merchants and citizens alike who are often confused regarding who to call for a variety of public-disorder, security or bylaw matters.

Without this information being readily available, citizens and businesses often call the RCMP for matters that could be handled more efficiently by the LG department responsible for that area of LG operations.

The brochure will need to differentiate between the services being delivered in the two separate cities: the Municipality of North Cowichan and the City of Duncan.

The creation of this simple brochure will be an effective tool to lessen crime and public disorder by giving the public access to information that will allow them to receive a timely and appropriate response to their concerns.

Recommended Action #3: Impact on Business and the Highway Corridor

That the Communities look for ways to address the stress being experienced by the business community and citizens in the Highway Corridor.

That the Communities take joint actions to collaborate and coordinate their efforts to lessen the impact of crime and public disorder occurring in their respective communities.

That the broader business community consider ways to partner on actions that could support the collective lessening of crime and public disorder.

The Highway Corridor business community has been significantly affected by crime and public disorder during the last two years. They are a small group of businesses that are highly committed to the community and support it in many ways. They are concerned and are looking for input regarding strategies to deal with the on-going public disorder and crime they are experiencing in their daily work.

The last two years have seen a deterioration in the quality of experience for their clientele as the stress being experienced across the province increases through the effects of homelessness, fentanyl, poverty, lack of housing, mental health issues and substance use issues. Many of the businesses have taken on substantial costs to remedy the public-disorder issues associated with needles, garbage, loitering, disturbances, theft and break-ins. Also, the costs of installing CCTV and hiring private security in response to crime and public disorder are high. These businesses range in size but are predominantly smaller in size and do not have the ability to withstand the continued drain of their energies and finances without broader community involvement towards finding resolutions to the on-going pressures of crime and public disorder.

From meeting and talking to these owners, I can say without hesitation that each one I have spoken with understands the health and social needs of the street population, but that does not solve their need to have their business thrive in the face of issues not of their making. Hence, they are looking to local government to consider what would help lessen the effects of crime and public disorder they are facing daily in the Highway Corridor.

The Highway Corridor itself is the Welcome/Entranceway to both communities and perceptions related to public disorder can change how visitors and the travelling public see the whole community. This is an important factor for consideration, and it is important that the business and tourism community work together on possible solutions. Levies could be considered as a way to bring forth other solutions that could be cost-shared by the business community.

I have worked with organized business groups that bring new ideas and positive change to public-disorder matters. It typically starts by focussing collaborative efforts on a single aspect of the problem that could be jointly addressed in order to bring about a positive result for all businesses. Once this problem has been addressed, the group could build off their success by looking at other initiatives to implement.

Recommended Action #4: Health and Social Service Roles

That the Communities recognize the important role of health and social service providers in the Communities and see them as key partners towards reducing crime and public disorder.

That Communities recognize the important work already being done by health and social service providers, such as the Cowichan Valley Basket Society (Food Bank), the Canadian Mental Health Association Sobering Centre, the Canadian Mental Health Association Peers (Clean Team/Sharps Team, Island Health Mental Health and Substance Use/Royal Canadian Mounted Police Car 60 & Integrated Response and the Island Health Overdose Prevention Site, towards reducing crime and public disorder.

That the Communities consider ways to collaboratively address the problem of garbage, waste and needles left in the community and in the Cowichan River and also consider how the existing CMHA Peer Group could be engaged to assist business owners and property owners in dealing with this problem.

That Communities consider taking on a staff facilitation and communication response role, through a Good Neighbour Agreement process, when issues arise between service providers and neighbourhoods.

That the Communities recognize the importance of the Cowichan River to Cowichan Tribes, and all our communities, and work to address the effect of needles being thrown in the river and people not feeling safe while walking on the dikes.

During my time spent in the communities of North Cowichan and Duncan interviewing stakeholders, I had the opportunity to speak with stakeholders with many perspectives on the issues, their causes and the ways to address them.

Goals aimed at lessening crime and public disorder are not in conflict with health or social goals. They are compatible and mutually supportive processes. I can say clearly that the most significant long-term action to lessen crime and disorder is found in the support of health and social service providers dealing with mental health, substance use and poverty reduction as well as building a range of housing for those in need.

Since my focus is specifically on reducing crime and public disorder, I'd like to recognize particular programs that fit those topics closely, while also filling other important roles for their clients. In particular, I'd like to mention the following (not in any prioritized order) programs:

- 1) Cowichan Valley Basket Society (Food Bank)
- 2) Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Sobering & Assessment Centre
- 3) CMHA Peer Group (Clean Team/Sharps Pick-up Team)
- 4) Island Health MHSU/RCMP Car 60 & Integrated Response
- 5) Island Health Overdose Prevention Site (OPS)

These services, in addition to all the valuable work they do for their clients, have a significant effect on the reduction of crime and public disorder in the community and should be recognized for the value they bring to lessening the impact of these issues.

The following are challenges I've learned about in your community that need community-wide assistance to lessen the impacts of crime and public disorder:

Needles

Needles are a magnet for community anger, angst, frustration and fear as well as a feeling of being victimized by those who discard of them improperly. It is particularly evident in talking to business and property owners that face the often daily need to move people along from their properties—and then dispose of the numerous needles as well as the garbage and waste left on their property.

Needles are a source of a high percentage of the frustrations I hear from the general community in almost every interview. Solutions are not there yet. I understand that addicts seek the instantaneous feeling they get from injecting. It is one of the preferred methods of drug use. I see great efforts to educate the public on how to dispose of

needles, but public concern for improperly discarded needles on private and public properties remains. In fact, the complaints appear to be increasing in the community.

Health and social service providers together with the community can help to resolve this disorder. Their existing programs, such as the Sobering & Assessment Centre, and CMHA Peer Group (Clean Team/Sharps Team) adds value to the community's effort to reduce crime and disorder while supporting people who are using substances.

Discarded needles and garbage left by the street population is one of the biggest "frustration factors" in the community, and we need to support efforts by health and social service programs to recognize the importance of these needle pick-up services to the community,

Without doubt, needles left on the street, which require the community to clean them up on its own, is a very concerning community issue. Health and social service programs that can help abate the problem and help with clean-ups need to be strongly supported by the entire community.

Efforts by the CMHA Peer Group need to be supported and appreciated. When the community sees the street population involved in solutions, it gives the community a sense of cohesion.

Needles in Cowichan River

The Cowichan River receives its name from the Cowichan Tribes "People of the Warm Land." The river is culturally and historically important in the lives of the people and to the salmon that are in it during the various stages of their lifecycle. This ancient heritage and culturally important river on the edge of the Highway Corridor and is under stress from literally 100s of needles being dropped into its waters. This is an example of public disorder that can be worked on by the whole community.

There needs to be a community-wide recognition of the harm being done to this river and the need to address needles in the river. There needs to be a willingness in the community to be part of the solution by recognizing, addressing, remediating and preventing this from happening in the future.

This could be part of the Safer Highway Corridor project or handled as a separate Communities-supported initiative. It is also a good project for the SWG in partnership with Cowichan Tribes and community services.

Island Health - Overdose Prevention Site

When I first started working on the SCP, I read newspaper articles about the opening of the OPS on Trunk Road and the concerns of the neighbourhood. I understand the community frustration, but I've also seen how these sites can fit in well with neighbours and significantly help influence safe needle disposal.

I encourage neighbours to engage and participate with any Good Neighbour Agreement (GNA) process that occurs. Discuss how community engagement in the beginning went, but then focus on opening up good lines of communication through the GNA process. The process works and I have been part of that experience on many other projects. The LGs have a role to play in helping facilitate collaboration within the community and resolution of community concerns.

From a crime and public-disorder perspective, the work of the OPS is exactly where the community needs to be in regard to full support. The OPS makes a significant difference to the levels of public disorder experienced on the street. Many in the community want needles off the street but they also want people to have a safe place use their drug of choice. The OPS provides this valuable role in the community.

The OPS is part of the solution, not part of the problem. It is an important way to reduce crime and public disorder in the community. A respectful GNA process involving the neighbourhood, local governments, the RCMP and Island Health will help everyone get through these often challenging start-up phases. The OPS can also encourage and communicate safe disposal practices with its client base as part of the solution.

Public Disorder Increases When There's Nowhere To Go

CMHA Warmland House offers services that are successful and vitally important to the community. However, it does not allow the use of drugs on its premises. This is not a criticism, simply a comment on the model. When a person takes opioids over a period of time, their body becomes dependant on it which leads to withdrawal symptoms within hours after the last use. The OPS is open from 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and they have funding for six hours per day. Many people who use opioids need to use first thing in the morning or they start to feel the symptoms of withdrawal, which can be unbearable. People who use substances who cannot or do not want to stay at CMHA Warmland House or the Cowichan Women Against Violence (CWAV) Women's Shelter because of their need to use a substance to stay well, stay on the street. They have nowhere to go, so they sometimes stay on private property during the night and leave behind waste and needles for the property owner to address.

Cowichan Valley Basket Society (Food Bank) is one of the few places during the day that feeds and allows people to stay, play cards and talk during opening hours. Otherwise, the street entrenched spend a lot of hours each day with no place to be personally safe, or use substances safely (except during opening hours) and no place to sleep each night if they are unable to stay at a shelter. This is one factor as to why so many people living on the streets are leaving needles and garbage on the ground and camping rough.

The Communities, businesses, residents, police services, First Nations, visitors and neighbourhoods see the resulting crime and public disorder that occurs daily as the homeless population lives on the street in the Highway Corridor area. Are there other community solutions?

Recommended Action #5: RCMP Crime Reduction – Crime Analyst

That the Communities support crime reduction to address crime occurring in the whole community as well as in the Highway Corridor that is affecting the personal safety of the homeless population on the streets.

That the Communities consider supporting a full-time RCMP criminal intelligence analyst position at the North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP Detachment.

That the RCMP criminal intelligence analyst be part of the Safer Working Group (see Recommended Action #1).

Criminal Intelligence Analyst

The criminal intelligence analyst researches, collates, evaluates and analyzes information to develop intelligence products that assist management in decision-making and provides recommendations to further intelligence and investigations. The analyst develops and applies specialized knowledge in specific fields and in law enforcement specialties and makes ongoing decisions regarding products, identification of crime trends and insights into the criminal environment. Analysts are considered an expert resource for detachments.

A RCMP crime intelligence analyst employed at the North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP Detachment will, in addition to having a full-time role dealing with community-wide crime analysis, be able to assist in identifying key predatory offenders in the community who cause violent crimes within the homeless population and who use fear, drugs and intimidation to organize thefts in the business and general community.

One of the most effective tools to reduce crime and public disorder that I have seen deployed through crime reduction is having a crime analyst working full time. There are many examples on Vancouver Island of a crime analyst working with police investigators to deal with chronic/prolific offenders. North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP Detachment currently has the use of crime analyst services one day of the week.

The Communities would be well served by having a full-time person in this role. This greatly multiplies the ability of police investigators to achieve crime reduction in the whole community. It will also be a valuable tool to lessen resulting public disorder in the Highway Corridor.

It is also important as a tool to reduce violence towards the homeless. The street population is victimized by predatory individuals who use fear and violence to intimidate them into acts that can involve organized shoplifting, break-ins, other crimes or forced prostitution.

In most cases, predation occurs when the victim is a vulnerable person entrenched on the street and has their own mental health and/or substance use issues. These predators are a very small percentage of the street population but cause significant violence and harm if not identified and dealt with by the police and courts.

Recommended Action #6: Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

That the Communities and the RCMP Detachment jointly learn, practice and apply Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles as another crime and public disorder reduction tool.

That the Communities use the upcoming Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design training hosted in the City of Duncan by Cowichan Community Policing as an opportunity to increase their knowledge regarding this valuable crime reduction tool in the community.

That the Communities consider hosting a presentation for community businesses, so they can learn about Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design practices and how to lessen crime and public disorder on their properties.

A successful action that a local government can take to assist a downtown, neighbourhood or business area, such as the Highway Corridor, under stress from crime and disorder is to train LG staff, enforcement officers and police to be able to provide a

CPTED assessment of specific areas under the most stress and to provide advice on the actions property owners can take to reduce those criminal activities.

During my time spent interviewing many persons in the Highway Corridor and surrounding area, I could see areas where previous CPTED actions have been taken. These actions have made a difference towards lessening crime and public disorder in those areas.

I've been involved in using CPTED as we tackled areas that experienced similar problems to those in the Communities. CPTED was used extensively and all staff dealing with public-disorder issues were CPTED trained. We also used the services of a CPTED professional for many LG-owned larger projects both in the planning stage and sometimes to address remedial security solutions where a CPTED assessment was not part of the initial building process.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design



CPTED training should also be considered as a necessary and valuable skill for bylaw enforcement officers, police officers, planners and park planning personnel. I recommend this training to communities as a valuable tool for addressing crime and public disorder. It is an integral part of developing safe public spaces in the community

and in areas under stress from crime or public disorder. This training can often be cost-shared with other communities.

I also recommend sponsoring a CPTED information session for businesses on how to take actions regarding their properties that lessen crime and discourage unwanted behaviour. It may also be possible to consider using real Highway Corridor areas as work examples for the training sessions. LGs may want to check with Cowichan Community Policing about this possibility.

Recommended Action #7: Dealing with Problem Properties

That the Communities and RCMP intervene early on nuisance properties occurring in neighbourhoods and consider implementing a nuisance property bylaw as an effective tool to deal with such properties.

Nuisance properties in community neighbourhoods can be identified as contributors to the distress being experienced. They are identified by the multiple visits from the police they receive because of noise and disturbance complaints from the neighbourhood. Nuisance properties are often associated with fights, yelling, shouting and disturbing the surrounding neighbourhood.

These properties can be drug houses or chronic “noisy party” houses operating in the neighbourhood. They can also be businesses that are not properly managing issues that arise as a result of their operations. Noise and neighbourhood disturbances are usually the common features regarding why complaints come into the police and often result in frustrated neighbours bringing their concerns to the attention of the mayor and council.

The goal of this recommendation is to provide the police with an LG-led response to a problem that causes frustration in a neighbourhood but cannot be remedied by laying criminal charges or by waiting through lengthy delays for court action.

The most successful resolution occurs when action is taken once the number of police visits shows a pattern of nuisance activity occurring or a significant neighbourhood concern has been reported and police visits have not been able to resolve the situation. When police cannot end the nuisance, the LG becomes involved by taking bylaw enforcement action under a nuisance-property bylaw.

The Communities need to have the ability to claim the costs for the visits by the police, the fire department and bylaw officers that are required to address nuisance activity at these properties. These properties, when acting as nuisances, can waste a large amount

of resources. By having to respond to a nuisance-property complaint, the police may be unable to respond to a more pressing issue in the community. Owners need to be held accountable for this misuse of police resources and for the unnecessary costs to the public.

The process of dealing with nuisance properties can require coordination and planning with health and social services if a displacement of persons is expected to occur. If needed, these services can work with youth and adult outreach services and help people find appropriate shelter, such as CMHA Warmland House and the CWAV Women's Shelter. These services are valued partners when dealing with people who need a place to go when a nuisance-property issue is being resolved. The process involves outreach to these services and they become part of the process when handling a nuisance property. The goal is to deal with neighbourhood concerns and fears created by nuisance activities that are on-going as a result of the resulting nuisance activity associated with the property. Another goal is to find assistance for those being displaced in the process.

Engagement of these properties should be coordinated and resolution should be sought through an LG-hosted person-to-person meeting involving the owner, the police and bylaw enforcement staff in order to gain early resolution.

In most cases, early intervention of this type brings positive action from the owner and the concern is usually addressed without a need for continual attendance. LG staff and RCMP officers would explain the nuisance-property process to the owner and provide information on the issues the owner needs to address in order to meet the requirements of the bylaw.

If the intervention meeting does not result in a resolution, the LG needs to be able to address such properties by way of fining or charging for costs. Each LG should look into the creation of a nuisance-property bylaw focussed on addressing problematic properties causing excessive calls for police, fire and bylaw services as a result of disturbances and nuisance behaviour caused by lack of action by the property owners.

As stated, this process starts with the goal of having the owner address the issues arising from their property. It is a positive interaction as long as the problem is addressed in a reasonable manner and timeframe and does not require the issue to be brought before council. If the issue is not addressed, council hears the matter and can elect to deem the property a nuisance.

Once deemed to be in contravention of the nuisance-property bylaw, cost recovery for services rendered attending nuisance properties can be sought through either fines or through taxes.

Note: LG will need to obtain an updated legal opinion when writing the bylaw.

Resourcing Considerations: Staffing Impact – Corridor Safety Office

That additional bylaw enforcement staffing and the contracting of a private security ambassador be considered as necessary to the resourcing of recommended actions in this SCP report.

That bylaw enforcement officers be in uniform due to the nature of enforcement duties.

That Occupational Health & Safety perform a workplace risk assessment to determine the need for bylaw enforcement officers to have personal protective equipment to perform their duties.

Municipality of North Cowichan – Staffing/Uniforms

The following recommendations are for the Municipality of North Cowichan.

The municipality should hire one (1) additional bylaw enforcement officer (BEO) to add to the two (2) current positions already in place and equally divide additional CSO duties between them. The current workload of your BEOs is approximately 330 files per year for each BEO. This is already higher than expected compared to other municipalities and I would consider your staffing level to be short by .75 of a position even without taking on the new CSO role. The municipality need to add an additional BEO and monitor the new CSO workload.

There will also be an increase in responsibility for the position of the senior bylaw compliance officer. This is a result of the increase in work out of the CSO and because bylaw enforcement officers will be responsible for a higher proportion of the action out of the SWG.

This new CSO duties for bylaw enforcement officers can only be performed by uniformed LG personnel due to the nature of enforcement duties in a challenging street

environment. I recommend that all three (2 existing and 1 additional BEOs) wear uniforms during the delivery of all bylaw services.

If not already completed, I recommend that an Occupational Health and Safety OHS Risk Assessment be done on the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for officers performing a bylaw enforcement role.

City of Duncan – Staffing/Uniforms

The following recommendations are for the City of Duncan.

The city should consider reconfiguring its current staffing levels by adding hours to existing personnel in order to meet a .5 of a position, which will focus on the Highway Corridor area. Alternatively, reduced parking enforcement could lead to an increased ability to focus resources in Highway Corridor duties.

This new CSO role for bylaw enforcement officers can only be performed by uniformed LG personnel due to the nature of enforcement duties in a challenging street environment.

If not already completed, I recommend that an OHS Risk Assessment be done on the use of PPE for officers performing a bylaw enforcement role.

Shared Cost of Renting Office Space

I do not see the increase in crime and public disorder as being seasonal in nature. It appears to have been a rising concern through the winter and issues were actively rising months ahead of any expected springtime increase with the warmer weather.

To be successful in addressing crime and public disorder, strategies will need to be operational in the areas under stress. The opening of a CSO in the stressed Highway Corridor area will be an important step.

I recommend that the LGs rent suitable storefront space to house a CSO in the Highway Corridor. This office will be the central work office for bylaw officers, security ambassadors and RCMP crime reduction members. It could be considered for a one-year initial rental contract and assessed yearly thereafter.

Cost of Private Security Ambassador Staff

This private security role is important to the success of a safer Highway Corridor project as discussed. It requires the contracting of dedicated private security staff who are trained and comfortable in dealing with a challenging street environment. The role is outlined in Recommended Action #2.

Concluding Comments

A supported SCP process will focus on reducing crime and disorder occurring in the Communities and specifically in the Highway Corridor. The development of an SCP works to address community concerns by coordinating enforcement, improving community communication and collaboration, supporting the health and social service community, supporting the business community and supporting neighbourhoods so all citizens achieve the goals of having a safe and healthy community.

Recommended Roll-Out

The following process is recommended for the rollout of the report's recommendations:

- The report goes to joint councils as a draft
- If the joint councils approve the report in principle, the report goes forward as a draft for input by stakeholder groups
- The report will consider all input prior to being finalized
- The report goes back to the joint councils for final approval
- If approved, implementation of phase two of the Safer Community Plan commences

The recommendation for an SCP that is initially focussed on the Highway Corridor is not a process to start and stop. This will only make future efforts more difficult to launch. This is especially true in the Highway Corridor where shop owners have a high level of frustration with the lack of resolution regarding current crime and public disorder. They have a sense of being isolated and rely on themselves for solutions without broader local government involvement. They have stopped reporting crime through frustration over a perceived lack of disinterest by the court system regarding their victimization.

It requires a commitment by all stakeholders to understand and to be willing to look for ways to lessen public-disorder impacts while carrying on their many important roles in the community.

If the recommendations in this report are supported, reported crime and public disorder may actually increase in the early stages of the SCP Implementation Phase as more

citizens and businesses learn of the role of the CSO and decide that they now have somewhere to call and receive assistance based on the “Who Do You Call?” pamphlet.

Your community cares about the availability of health and social services to those in need. It also cares about the quality of life for neighbourhoods, businesses and all its citizens. The Communities have demonstrated the ability to achieve their goals through a history of working together, and I’m sure it will also achieve the goal of lessening the impact of crime and public disorder occurring in the community.

It is a pleasure to meet with individuals in the community while working on this SCP. I thank everyone that I have interviewed for sharing their words, wisdom and knowledge.

Thank you for inviting me to your community and receiving this report.

Randy Churchill
Consulting For Municipalities

Report

Date September 2, 2020

File:

To Council

From Michelle Martineau, Manager, Legislative Services

Endorsed:



Subject Leadership Development Opportunities

Purpose

To identify opportunities to strengthen the functionality of the Council decision-making process.

Background

Members of Council wear many hats and solve a wide range of complex problems every day. To do that successfully requires continuous learning and leadership development, in addition to self-assessment to identify the areas/functions that are working well and those which may need improvement. Ongoing training in conjunction with annual Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) conferences will help to provide Council with the tools they need to strengthen and improve their performance as a decision-making body.

The orientation delivered to Council following the 2018 general local election, was simply the first step in their ongoing development as elected officials and should be supplemented by focused training on a regular basis. This is not unlike the Employee Feedback Development System launched earlier this year to establish a process that ensures meaningful performance/development feedback and planning discussions on a regular basis.

Discussion

This report proposes to identify some areas for development for Council to consider to improve their performance and effectiveness as an elected [decision-making] body. The following list of potential training opportunities is not intended to be exhaustive, but simply to get the discussion started regarding the kind of training Council would like to receive during the remainder of their term:

1. Building Local Government and First Nations Relationships

Learn how to work collaboratively to promote strong local government-First Nation relationships and/or establish successful partnerships.

2. Public Hearing Refresher

A review of the public hearing purpose, pre-hearing matters, hearing conduct, and post-hearing matters, such as procedural fairness requirements, statutory rules.

3. Meeting Rules Refresher

Review rules for contentious meetings, quorum and voting issues, motions, amendments, "tabling," points of order, the Chair's roles, including advising graciously and confidently about meeting

procedures. This type of session is extremely beneficial for Councillors when they are Acting Mayor and have to chair a Committee of the Whole or Council meeting.

4. Mid-Term Board review/evaluations

Evaluate the decision-making body, the Chair, individual members, meetings, the relationship with the administration, and the relationship with the community.

5. Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA) – What is private information, and what is public?

Inform and educate Council on the law and best practices about *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPPA), including the use of personal/local government emails and calendars, and social media.

Options

1. Identify the areas where Council would benefit from additional coaching/educational training and list them in order of priority, beginning with the first session to be held in the fall of 2020, and
 - (i) Direct staff to contract subject matter experts to facilitate a minimum of two educational sessions per year at the cost of less than \$10,000 per session; or
 - (ii) Direct staff to facilitate those educational sessions internally; or
 - (iii) Direct staff to coordinate a minimum of two educational sessions per year that are facilitated either internally or externally at the cost of less than \$15,000 per year.
2. Increase the Council convention/seminar budget by \$15,000 to \$20,000, beginning in 2021 to provide sufficient funding for ongoing education and training.
3. Direct staff to research various training opportunities and coordinate a workshop at a future Committee of the Whole meeting so that Council can undertake a self-assessment of themselves as a decision-making body in order to develop a training schedule based upon their needs to build communication and understanding among members that leads to a stronger and more cohesive working group.
4. Direct staff to contact neighbouring local governments to ascertain if there is a desire to partner with North Cowichan in providing educational sessions to their Councils/Boards.
5. Maintain the status quo and continue with training currently offered during the UBCM and the FCM annual conventions.

Implications

Financial – the cost to contract a consultant [subject matter expert] to facilitate a training session ranges between \$5,000 and \$10, 000 (including travel), which varies depending on the length of the session or how far the facilitator must travel. Due to COVID-19 and the cancellation of several conferences, there are funds available within Council’s training [convention/seminar] budget to cover the fees to bring in consultants to facilitate up to two sessions in 2020. However, Council should consider increasing this budget in future years to incorporate ongoing education and training opportunities.

Personnel – there would be impacts to delivery timelines for other projects identified under the Council Strategic Plan, the Operational Strategic Plan, and Departmental Business Plans if training sessions were facilitated internally, as considerable staff resource time would be required to prepare and deliver each session.

Leadership – Council will have a clear idea of their role so that they can lead effectively and provide broad oversight to ensure North Cowichan is well-governed. Ongoing training will assist Council to become very knowledgeable and skilled in many areas of community governance responsibilities.

Recommendation

Staff has not made a recommendation, as their intention is to start the conversation and for Council to determine what their educational needs are, including prioritizing that training and establishing the frequency for which they wish to receive it.